WHIRRAKEE

September 1991 Vol. 12 No. 8

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
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Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $16.00; Family $20.00; Pensioner and Junior $11.00. **Whirrakee** subscription only is $16.00.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Kangaroo Flat Secondary College's Bicentennial Room which is behind the sports ovals at the Kangaroo Flat Secondary College in Olympic Parade, Kangaroo Flat. Meetings start at 7:30pm and conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month in members' homes. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearers listed above, together with the following members: J Allen; A Bridley; W Demeo; R Fyffe; L Leeson; R Ruddick; M Stone; R Watkins.

Excursions The assembly point for excursions is outside the Ministry of Education complex in Havlin Street East, Bendigo, unless otherwise specified. Full-day excursions normally commence at 10am (usually on a Sunday); half-day excursions normally commence at 2pm and may be either on a Saturday or Sunday. Full-day or half-day excursions are usually held on the weekend following the General meeting. Campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has 2 active sub-groups:

Bird Observers Group: meets on the first Friday of the month, at 7:30pm. The venue for meetings is the Kangaroo Flat Secondary College's Bicentennial Room which is behind the sports ovals at the Kangaroo Flat Secondary College in Olympic Parade, Kangaroo Flat.
President Anne Bridley (49 3479)

Mammal Survey Group: meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 8pm in members' homes as announced in the monthly diary. **Note** the recent change in the meeting night from Thursday to Wednesday.
Chairman Laurie Leeson, 76 Lawson Street, Bendigo (43 0521)
Secretary Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crescent, Kennington (43 4063)

Change of venue for General Meetings and Bird Observers Group meetings.
Please note that the BFNC Committee, after investigating various possibilities for our meeting venue, has decided that the most suitable venue for our meetings is the Kangaroo Flat Secondary College's Bicentennial Room which is behind the sports ovals at the Kangaroo Flat Secondary College in Olympic Parade, Kangaroo Flat. We will begin meeting at this new venue in July. To ensure that everyone finds out about this change as soon as possible it would help if all members endeavour to draw this to the attention of friends and other members.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club.
Vol. 12, No. 8, September, 1991

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region.

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles.

Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*. Articles sent by post should be addressed to: Rodney Orr, 2 Cockerel Court, Bendigo 3550.

Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club and acknowledgement should be given to the author and the Club.

Back issues are available at a cost of 80c each. Complete sets are available at $8.00 for each volume. The above prices do not include postage.

Cover Photograph: This magnificent specimen of Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*)was photographed by David McDonald during our walk along the Big Hill Range in May this year.

Excursion report: Looking at Orchids at Kooyoora
Author: Anne Bridley

In perfect spring-like weather in July, 18 Club members and friends travelled to Back Road in the Kooyoora State Park to look at orchids. Our climb up the hill to Long Rock was rewarded by the sight of numerous orchid basal leaves and some flowers.

Orchids in flower were: Little Striped Greenhood (*Pterostylis alata*); Dwarf Greenhood (*Pterostylis nana*); Helmet Orchid (*Corybas diemenicus*).

Cyrtostylis reniformis); Common Onion Orchid (*Microtis unifolia*); Green-comb Spider Orchid (*Caladenia dilatata)*; Blunt Greenhood (*Pterostylis curta*) in bud; Purplish Beard Orchid (*Calochilus robertsonii*); *Thelymitra* sp. (Sun Orchid).

Other plants in flower were: Early Nancy (*Wurmbea dioica*); Whorled Zieria (*Zieria aspalathoides*) a rare plant in Victoria, with very attractive mauve-coloured flowers - a member of the Rutaceae and very similar to Boronia; Varnish Wattle (*Acacia verniciflua)*; Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*); Twining Glycine (*Glycine clandestina*); Tiny Yellow Star (*Hypoxis glabella*).

Dodonea sp.); Rock Fern (*Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia*); Adders Tongue (*Ophioglossum lusitanicum*); Scented Sundew (*Drosera whittakeri*); Creamy Stackhousia (*Stackhousia monogyna*) in bud; Wallowa (*Acacia calamifolia*) in bud; Deane's Wattle (*Acacia deanii*); Blakeley's Red Gum (*Eucalyptus blakeleyi*); Red Stringybark (*Eualyptus macrorhyncha*); Long-leaved Box (*Eucalyptus goniocalyx*); Joint-leaf Rush (*Juncus holoschoenus*) in a pool of water on Long Rock; Variable Sword-sedge (*Lepidosperma laterale*); Prickly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum juniperinum*).

Birds observed were: Sulphur-crested Cockatoo; Weebill; Brown-headed, White-eared, Yellow-tufted, Yellow-faced and Fuscous Honeyeaters; Eastern Spinebill; Buff-rumped, Chestnut-rumped and Yellow Thornbills; White-throated and Brown Treecreepers; Wedge-tailed Eagle; Grey Fantail; Spotted and Striated Pardalotes; Superb Fairy-wren; Yellow and Scarlet Robins; Red Wattlebird; Kookaburra; Golden Whistler; Australian Raven; Grey Shrike-thrush; Silvereye; Eastern Rosella.

After lunch, we moved to the Melvilles Caves picnic ground where Rod Orr showed us 4 species of mistletoe. These were Box Mistletoe (*Amyema miquelii*) on eucalypts; Grey Mistletoe (*Amyema quandang*), Harlequin Mistletoe (*Lysiana exocarpi*) both flowering, and Drooping Mistletoe (*Amyema pendulum*) all on Deane's Wattle (*Acacia deanii*).

Birds at the picnic ground included: White-plumed, Spiny-cheeked, Yellow-tufted and New Holland Honeyeaters; Grey Fantail; White-winged Chough; Little Lorikeets which were foraging on the leaves of *Acacia deanii* and Grey Mistletoe, Spotted Pardalote; Red Wattlebird; Kookaburra; Magpie; Galah; Mistletoebird; Grey Shrike-thrush, and White-throated Treecreeper.

Our final stop was on Brenannah Road where there was a good stand of Flame Heath flowering. We climbed to the top of the ridge through Grey Box and Wallowa. At the top, we found the Larger Striped Greenhood (*Pterostylis robusta*) and Dwarf Greenhood (*Pterostylis nana*) both flowering. On the hill we also found the basal leaves of Autumn Greenhood (*Pterostylis revoluta*), Swan Greenhood (*Pterostylis cycnocephala*), and Waxlip Orchid(*Glossodia major).* Also flowering there, were Golden Wattle, Ploughshare Wattle (*Acacia gunnii*), and Spreading Wattle (*Acacia genistifolia*) and Urn Heath (*Melichrus urceolata*) was in bud.

On the way home, along the Kingower Road, Rod showed us some Fleshy Mistletoe (*Amyema miraculosum*) which was growing on another mistletoe (*Amyema miquelii*) which was growing on the large Yellow Gums (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*) beside the road.

Pied Currawongs and the spread of bushland weeds

Author: Tom Burton

This winter has been a good one for Pied Currawongs, which are conspicuous and common in the Strathdale - Flora Hill area. They have taken a great liking to the Lilly-pilly in our front lawn and make interesting viewing from inside the house - armchair birdwatching.

David Bass (1990), in an article in *Corella*, describes observations he made of Pied Currawongs in Armidale NSW. He observed the birds' feeding behaviour, mapped their flight paths and examined pellets that the birds regurgitated when they roosted (usually on an old eucalypt or a pine tree) after a feed. He found that the pellets were full of Privet, Hawthorn and Firethorn seeds. All of these are garden plants that have become established in the Armidale State Forest. Bass tried to germinate seeds of Firethorn and Hawthorn taken from the pellets and succeeded. From his observations of flight paths, Bass suggests that Pied Currawongs are major agents in the spread of these species, and probably Privet as well.

So, there is some chance that Lilly-pillies may become established in the Bendigo forests. Somehow (as with Cootamundra Wattle, which are currently being extirpated from our forests) I can't feel as badly about that as about the spread of Hawthorn or Privet.

Reference: Bass, D.A. (1990) 'Pied Currawongs and seed dispersal'. *Corella* 14:1. pp 24-27

Bird Notes and Observations for August meeting

Author: Bird Observers Group

Highlights

Black Kite, 1, Terrick Terrick S.P, 23/6/91
Mallee Ringneck, 1, Kamarooka S.P., 22/9/90 (reported in Bird Observer Nov. 1990)
Bush Thick-knee, 2, Eppalock, July 1991; 1, Eppalock, 25/7/91

Breeding

White-fronted Chat, 3 eggs, Calivil, 20/7/91
White-winged Chough, 1A on nest, Prairie West, 19/7/91
Masked Lapwing, 4 eggs, Bendigo Sewerage Farm, 30/7/91
Black Swan, 2A & 5 cygnets, Kennington Res., 6/5/91
Black Swan, 4A & 4 young, Kennington Res., 9/7/91
Yellow-rumped Thornbill, 3 eggs, Calivil, 28/7/91

Observations

Grey-crowned Babbler, 4, Eppalock, 18/6/91
Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo, 1 heard, Kennington forest, 12/7/91
Shining Bronze-cuckoo, 1 heard, Sedgwick, 29/7/91
Fan-tailed Cuckoo, 1 heard, Sedgwick, 25/7/91
Fan-tailed Cuckoo, 1 , Strathdale, 16/6/91
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, 1, Junortoun, 28/6/91
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, 1, One Tree Hill R.P., 12/7/91
Pied Currawong, 1, Spring Gully, 25/7/91
Pied Currawong, 3+ heard, One Tree Hill R.P., 2/8/91
Pied Currawong, 2, Kennington Res., 9/7/91
Zebra Finch, about 6, Emu Ck, 18/7/91
Little Grassbird, 2 heard, Kennington Res., 23/7/91
Black-shouldered Kite, 1, Junortoun Rise, 18/7/91
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, 1, Wellsford forest, 7/7/91
Little Lorikeet, 2, Longlea, 28/7/91
Olive-backed Oriole, 1 heard, Strathfieldsaye, 2/8/91
Yellow-billed Spoonbill, 1, Mandurang, 25/7/91
Yellow-billed Spoonbill, 1, Longlea, 28/7/91
Brown Thornbill, 1, One Tree Hill R.P., 12/7/91
Yellow-rumped Thornbill, 21, Junortoun Rise, 18/7/91
Rufous Whistler, 1, Bendigo East, 1/8/91
Dusky Woodswallow, 15+, Flora Hill, 10/7/91

Lists

Calivil June 91
Emu Ck 18/7/91
Kennington forest 12/7/91
One Tree Hill R.P. 12/7/91
Sedgwick 25/7/91 to 2/8/91
Terrick Terrick S.P. 23/6/91

Non-Local Observations

Freckled Duck, 7, L. Wendouree, Ballarat, 6/7/91
Silvereye, 1, Barooga (NSW), 8/7/91

Notes

Highlight of the month and for a few months was the sighting of the Bush Thick-knee near the Eppalock school. Apparently they have been lurking in the area for some years, and it is pleasing to know that they are still in the region. The Thick-knee, a quaint name for a striking bird, has been in decline across the state. They appear not to tolerate subdivision and the spread of suburbs and small holdings, and they may also be more susceptible than most native birds to predation by foxes, especially because they nest on the ground. One of their requirements is some fallen timber for them to shelter in during the day.

The Mallee Ringneck was sighted near Millwood Dam. This is only the third record of this species in the region. Vagrants are found occasionally outside their mallee stronghold and they are often seen in the Terricks. The similar Port Lincoln Ringneck is feral in the Bendigo district, and is often seen in Strathdale Park. They are distinguished by face-colour. The Mallee Ringneck's face is blue-green, while the Port Lincoln's is black.

The Pied Currawong is present in abundance this year, very numerous and noisy in the Strathdale-Flora Hill area. This is a regular winter visitor, but the numbers vary from year to year.

Records of the Swift Parrot have been sparse, however. In most years they persist in the district until late winter - early spring.

The nest of the White-fronted Chat was in wheat grass growing at the side of the road. The bird did its "broken-wing act". The Chough was on the same nest last year. One of the cygnets at Kennington Res., from July was missing at 9/7/91.

The Silvereye at Barooga was re-trapped at the same site it was banded at 4 years previously. According to the "Courier Nature News", this is the first record of Freckled Ducks for L. Wendouree. They arrived about 6 weeks prior to July 7 and remained there. Freckled Ducks have become rare in Victoria. There is no authentic record of breeding for Freckled Ducks in Victoria for 20 years.

The Singing (Horsfield's) Bushlark
(Mirafra javanica)
Author: Alf Howe

They are commonly known around the Calivil area as a Brown Fieldlark. They usually arrive around the middle of October but last spring we saw the first ones on August 20 1990 and have recorded them every month since until June 14 1991. On the last occasion it was during the 3 day spell of fine weather after the first lot of June rains. Four birds were very active flying in display giving the impression of being courting birds. Since then they have gone, I suppose to their wintering areas.

This thick-billed, rather plump lark is fairly easy to distinguish when in flight as it tends to hover before alighting. It has a lovely song often heard on moonlight nights in late spring. It has a wide range of notes (at times they seem to mimic Reed Warblers which live in a Cumbungi dam close by (this is my own opinion - I might be wrong.)

They nest in a small hollow under a tussock of grass; the nest of woven grass is slightly hooded. As the grass around the nest is usually dense, a tunnel under grass is formed by the birds as they go to the nest. They don't go directly to the nest, but creep through the grass to it. The eggs, 3 usually or 4, are whitish and almost totally covered with dark grey-brown freckles.

I have seen parties of up to 20 Singing Bush-larks in late summer when they are on the move. It would be interesting to know how far the southern birds migrate during the cooler months. I have watched their comings and goings all my life and found a good many of their nests over the years.

Campaspe Dryland Community Working Group - Midyear ravings, questions and information overload
Author: John Lindner

There would not be many people in this part of the world who don't know at least a little about salinity. But it's much more difficult to find out what's being done about it, and to see something being done somewhere. It's another one of those huge problems that will probably be with us for ever, and if you're not involved, it's someone else's or the government's problem. But if you've got an inside look, it's very interesting indeed, which is the case with my involvement with the Campaspe Dryland Community Working Group.

The State Salinity Strategy - the big picture

Salinity has been identified as the most significant problem facing the environment in Victoria, in particular because of the profound, long-term consequences it has for the economy: the salt-affected areas are all agriculturally valuable. In addition, salinity will have adverse effects on the plants and animals of waterways and wetlands of all types.

In 1988, the State Government's salinity strategy was released. Called "Salt Action: Joint Action", it is presented in the form of a highly readable booklet which summarises the environmental threat and the steps necessary to address it. You may obtain a copy of this booklet, free of charge, from the Department of Conservation and Environment, Hargreaves Street, Bendigo. It is important to understand that the salinity strategy is supported by all political parties. The whole strategy is overseen by the Salinity Bureau, itself responsible to the Natural Resources and Environment Committee of Cabinet, and involves a number of key government departments:

*Conservation and Environment
*Agriculture and Rural Affairs
*Rural Water Commission
*Water Resources
*Planning and Urban Growth
*Environment Protection Authority

On another level, Victoria has to co-ordinate its programs with New South Wales and South Australia, since the reduction of salt loads in all our streams and rivers ultimately affects the salt loads in the most important river of them all, the Murray. The Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council co-ordinates state and interstate programs in this regard.

Although much is known about the causes of salinity and how its effects may be reduced, a problem is caused when decisions have to be made in the management of large areas. If these are made purely by government agencies, it is likely that resentment and opposition will result because nobody in the locality has been consulted. A good example of this is the recent very vocal opposition to the price rises for irrigation water imposed by the Rural Water Commission. On the other hand, if the action proposals are made by members of the community in the first place, and widely circulated for consideration by the people most affected by them, it is more likely that they will be supported.

The Campaspe Dryland Sub-region

It is to this end that salinity management plans are being developed for three dryland subregions in Central Victoria at the moment: those of the Campaspe, the Loddon and the Avoca rivers. The management plan boundary of each is defined on a catchment basis. The dryland, more southerly components of each these river catchments are to be distinguished from the irrigation components which are situated further north on the flat plains country. Dryland areas rely on rainfall for pasture and crops. Irrigated land may draw water from the Campaspe River or the extensive channel system fed from it and the Waranga Channel.

The boundaries of the Campaspe dryland subregion are defined as follows:

*The southern boundary is the Great Dividing Range, passing through the Wombat State Forest between Bullarto and Mt. Macedon.

*The western boundary is the divide between the Loddon and Campaspe Rivers, so it passes to the west of the three reservoirs on the upper Coliban River, over Mt.Alexander, west of the Bendigo urban area and on through the Whipstick.

*The eastern boundary passes to the east of Kyneton and Woodend, through the Cobaw State Forest, just along the east side of the Northern Highway to Mt. Ida, up along the edge of the Redcastle State Forest and along

Cornella Creek to Lake Cooper. This last section is the main exception to the catchment definition of the boundary: The east side of the Mt. Camel range would normally be in the Goulburn Dryland area. However, because the east side of the range is closely linked to the west side in terms of salinity problems, hydrogeology, agriculture and community, it is included in our area.

* The northern boundary is defined by the irrigated agricultural areas at Lockington, Ballendella and Rochester. These comprise the Campaspe West and Rochester Irrigation Districts for which salinity management plans are being developed also. The total area of the Campaspe dryland subregion is approximately 500,000 hectares.

The salinity problem in the sub-region and possible solutions

Put simply, salinity is the result of change, a vast, all-embracing change that has occurred since European settlement. It has one clear cause: the use to which we have put the land has meant the large-scale destruction of the once total cover of deep-rooted trees and shrubs, and their replacement by pastures and crops that do not use up the same amount of water available from rainfall.

Before settlement, the water tables were deep, the subsoil dry. Now the water tables have risen considerably, often to quite near the surface and the subsoil is saturated. This water must move somewhere due to the pressure of other water entering the water-table further away in the hill country (recharge zone). It moves slowly along underground, generally northwards, and as a result dissolves and moves the salts that before were stable due to the dryness.

Where the salt-laden water table comes very near the surface or could even be above it (discharge zone), salinity results due to the salt levels increasing as the moisture evaporates. The dramatic changes caused range from completely lifeless, bare earth that will grow nothing, to plant communities that can tolerate salt (eg. the useless Spiny Rush, but also several varieties of pasture grass). This model may be applied to the dying trees in the Strathdale Park bushland reserve, due to watering of gardens on the higher area above the reserve; to the numerous highly saline areas occurring at the base of the Mt. Camel Range for its entire length; to the appearance of areas on the northern plains where the composition of the pasture species has changed in some areas.

But this apparently simple cause has a myriad of complicated components and effects, depending particularly on the geology and climate of the area, which together with the current land uses and the management approaches and techniques completes the particular description of the problem for any given area.

For example, the relationship of the recharge zones to the discharge zones varies: along the Mt. Camel Range, they are quite close and this relationship is direct (local groundwater system); in the headwaters of Axe Creek, the recharge zone of the fractured metamorphic rock causes discharge at considerable distances along the stream line (intermediate groundwater system with some local input); on the northern plains, recharge occurs over large areas of the surface rather than at a distance(regional groundwater system). Stream salinities vary greatly across the catchment. Those in the upper part to the south of Lake Eppalock are very low; tributaries below the lake may have very high salinities, building up during the summer and autumn, and decreasing rapidly as winter rains flush the salt load into the Campaspe, which ultimately discharges 60,000 tonnes of salt per year into the Murray River. To make the analysis of the problem and a consideration of possible control options more manageable, a number of land management units have been designated. Research work has indicated that areas with similar geological and hydrological features show similar salinity characteristics. A standardised system of these units has been developed across the the three dryland subregions, and the Campaspe Dryland Sub-region has thirteen such land management units. These are grouped as follows:

*Campaspe River flood plain	2 units
*Areas of volcanic origin	3 unit
*Areas of glacial origin	1 unit
*Granite areas	1 unit
*Metamorphic ridges	1 unit
*Sedimentary areas	4 units
*Greenstone range	1 unit

The actual control of salinity is, of course, going to be a very complex problem, one which we have barely started to tackle.

Several important facets must somehow be equally catered for: the quality of the environment, the productive capacity of the land and the well-being of the population. One option is to do nothing at all, in which case the problem will undoubtedly worsen, and these three facets will all suffer. There is much evidence that the effects of salinity have by no means peaked or stabilised. There is worse in store.

The key to salinity control is land management, with particular reference to the farming community which controls the bulk of it. Many options are available, but financial incentives and expert assistance and advice will be needed to implement them:

*Improvement of relatively poor "natural" pastures from ones which are largely inactive during the critical winter period to those which can use more water then.

*Improvement of the ability of crops to use soil moisture by variety selection and rotation procedure.

*Tree planting on hilly and rocky recharge areas. This of course will also have other benefits.

*Treatment of discharge areas by sowing salt-tolerant productive pasture species (eg. Tall Wheat Grass, Strawberry Clover)

Altering land management practices is an enormous challenge and its recommendation may ultimately be the main task of the working group plan.

Formation of the community working group

It is this context that I was nominated as a member of the Campaspe Dryland Community Working Group at the end of 1990. Loosely, I am representing groups with an environmental interest, such as the Bendigo and District Environment Council and Bendigo Field Naturalist Club. At the same time, community working groups were also established for the Avoca and Loddon dryland areas.

The Campaspe Dryland C.W.G. has thirteen members, whose origins cover all areas of the catchment. Eight of them are farmers and two are not, one of these being me. In addition, there are three consultant members representing government departments (Conservation and Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Rural Water Commission). The convenor of the group is a Salinity Planning Officer, Shawn Butters, whose job is to service salinity planning in the Campaspe dryland area. He therefore organises the meetings, takes the minutes, prepares reports and liaises with the Technical Support Group, and much more. The group recently elected its own chairman, Tom James of Sutton Grange. Each of the C.W.G.'s has a similar structure, and in fact the three Salinity Planning Officers all work together.

Alongside the C.W.G. is the Technical Support Group, comprising eighteen expert people from the three major Government Departments involved in salinity research and on the ground programs in Central Victoria (Conservation and Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Rural Water Commission). These people work across all three C.W.G.'s, but six of them specifically relate to the Campaspe C.W.G. A key facility in salinity research is the Centre for Land Protection Research, a division of the Department of Conservation and Environment, located at what was the old teachers' college in Osborne Street. Many of the Technical Support Group people are located here, and the C.W.G. meets there too. If the Land Protection Research unit has another open day as it did in late 1990, make sure you go. You will be quite astounded at what the researchers do across the whole of Victoria, and not just in the field of salinity.

1991 achievements and the task ahead

Up to the end of June, the C.W.G. has held nine meetings. Five of these included tours of key areas of the catchment: Axe Creek, Mt. Camel Range, Kyneton-Malmsbury, Knowsley and the northern plains. One was a special briefing day on technical aspects of salinity and another involved a careful look at the Inception Report and various procedural matters. Two were devoted to consideration of the budget program for 1991 - 1992.

So far, all our time has been spent coming to grips with understanding the salinity problem across the catchment. A key point in the process was the approval of an Inception Report, which was our submission to the Planning and Environment Committee of Cabinet: this summarises the current situation with regard to salinity in the catchment and is the first step in the process of producing a salinity management plan.

The C.W.G. is aiming to produce a draft salinity management plan by November 1991. This will then be released for public comment before the final version is written and published. The aim is for this to occur by June 1992.

Does all this sound complicated, convoluted and difficult? Well let me assure that it is complicated and presents quite a challenge. It is part of our task as members of the group to thoroughly understand the problem and be able to interpret it to members of the public through the final salinity management plan. There are many dedicated research people who have been investigating salinity for years, but they are severely limited in their capacity to liaise with the public. We are part of the process of increasing the number of people familiar with the whole scenario. The final proof of our usefulness will be the acceptance of the salinity management plan by the people whom it most affects.

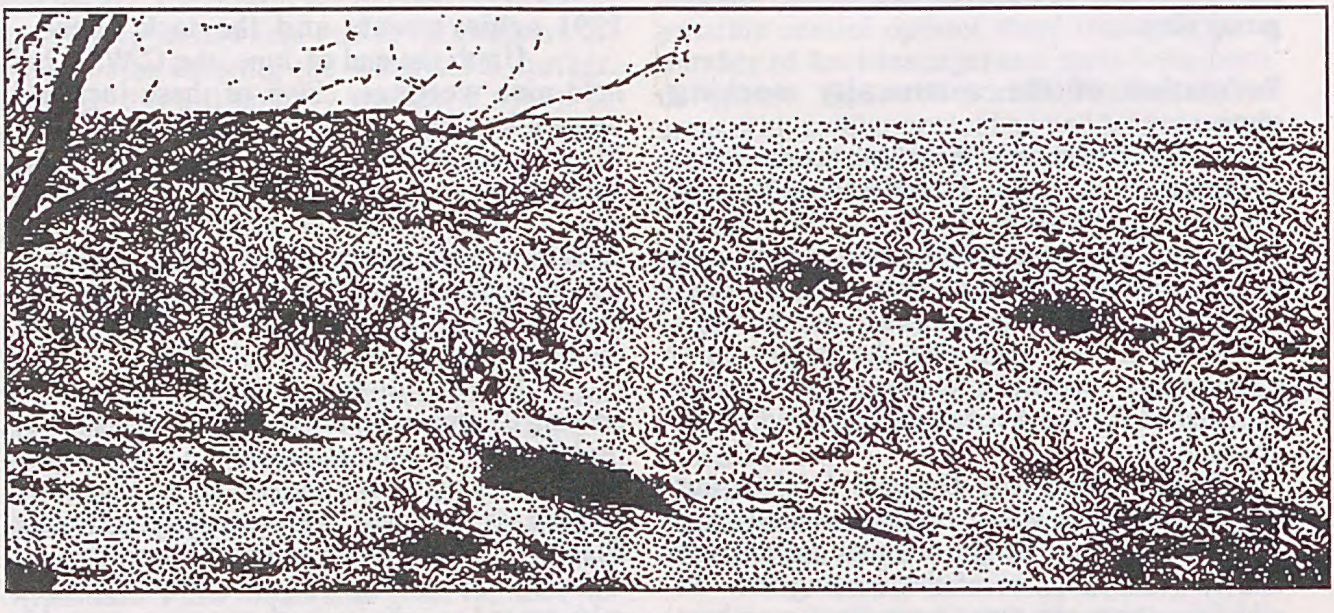
Which brings me to the bothersome little question of whether the C.W.G. is just acting as a rubber stamp for the people who do the research and write the reports. On the surface this may appear to be the case, and as we struggled over the choices that had to be made about the projects to be financed for 1991 - 1992, it was hard not to be sceptical.

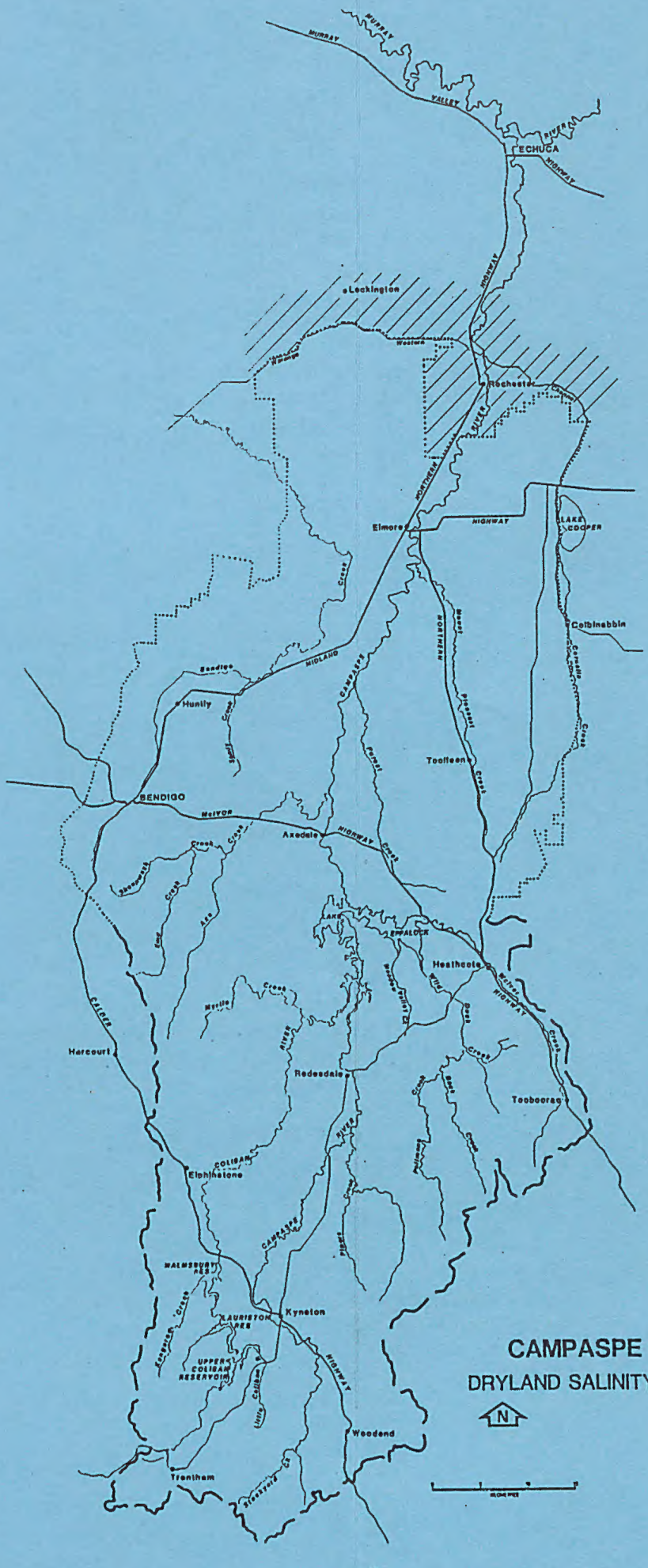
However, the more time that is spent considering the whole problem, the more the group gains the confidence to express itself.

So the Inception Report was given a thorough examination before being approved, and I feel confident that we will not be releasing anything without critical evaluation.

Other Salinity Management Plans

The preparation and implementation of salinity management plans is in various stages for a range of quite different sub-regions in northern Victoria. For example, that for the Nangiloc-Colignan area, an intensive agricultural irrigated area of 39,000 hectares near Mildura, has just been published in draft form and is open for public input; that for the Goulburn dryland area (about 10% of the area of Victoria) is in the process of implementation, the final plan having been published in 1989. For our own area, the names to look for are the Campaspe, Loddon and Avoca salinity management plans: you are sure to hear more about them in the media.

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Axedale
Toolleen
Heathcote
Harcourt
Redesdale
Toobourac
Elphinstone
Kyneton
Woodend
Tarnham
CAMPASPE RIVER CATCHMENT
DRYLAND SALINITY MANAGEMENT PLAN AREA
N

Diary

Meetings

Wednesday September 11, 7:30pm, Kangaroo Flat Secondary College Bicentennial Room.

Annual General Meeting: Secretary's Report & President's Address followed by Election of Office Bearers for 1991-1992.

Wednesday October 9, 7:30pm, Kangaroo Flat Secondary College Bicentennial Room.

Speaker: Neil Armstrong, 'The beauty of our little native fish'. Neil will illustrate his talk with slides of native fish which we seldom see. He says that "it is a pleasure to show what is hidden away in our streams."

Bird Observers Group

Friday October 4, 7:30pm, Kangaroo Flat Secondary College Bicentennial Room.

Bird of the Night: Banded Lapwing.

A general discussion will be held on recent observations of bird breeding.

Mammal Survey Group

There will be no September meeting of this group because of the school holidays - the next meeting will be:

Wednesday October 23, 8pm, Alan Spence's home, 97 Carpenter Road, Bendigo (42 3067)

Committee meeting

Wednesday September 18 , 8pm, Bob Ruddick's home, Markevitch Lane, (off McIvor Road) Bendigo (49 3287)

Excursions

Sunday September 15: Rushworth Forest - leader: Norm & Edna Cleeve. Leave from Havlin Street at 10am. We will meet our leaders outside their house at 10:45 (3km through Heathcote on the corner of Nagambie Road - Norm will leave a yellow ute on the roadside to mark the meeting place). Bring lunch, morning afternoon tea and all the usual essential equipment (camera, binoculars, wet weather gear good walking shoes or boots etc.).

Sunday October 13: Wildflower Drive - leader Anne Bridley. This is planned as a half-day local excursion - a Spring visit to a very interesting part of the One Tree Hill Regional Park. Morning will be a better time to see and hear birds, so we will leave from Havlin Street at 10am and travel to the Strathfieldsaye Road end of Wildflower Drive. There is room for several cars to park near the picnic table just inside the entrance to Wildflower Drive.

Supper

The usual arrangements for supper are as follows: members either bring a plate **or** pay $1 for supper. This small amount is used by the Treasurer to reimburse members who purchase essential supper supplies.